

Safe Schools Committee Meeting  
March 28, 2018, 12:15 PM  
Criminal Justice Institute  
26 Corporate Hill Drive  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

Minutes

Chairperson Dr. Cheryl May called the meeting to order at 12:28 PM. The following voting members were present: Ms. Deborah Coffinan, Mr. Jason Clark, Ms. Phyllis Curtis, Mr. Randy Goodnight, Sgt. Chester Jones, Dr. Cheryl May Mr. Scott Spainhour, and Lt. Brant Tosh. A quorum was established.

The following ex office members were present: Ms. Linda Graham, Mr. John Gray, and Ms. Otistene Smith.

The following staff members were present: Ms. Kimberly Friedman, Ms. Vicki French, Ms. Michelle Griffin, and Mr. John Kaminar.

The following guests were present: Mr. Tripp Walter (attorney for APSRC), and Mr. Elbert Harvey (Arkansas Department of Education).

Dr. May asked the committee members to review the minutes from the September 20, 2017 meeting. Lt. Tosh moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Spainhour seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. May stated reported that on March 1, 2018 Governor Hutchinson had established School Safety Commission with herself as chair and Mr. Kaminar as a member. The commission was tasked to analyze K-12 school safety and to provide an initial report to the governor by July 1, 2018. She discussed the focus areas of the commission and the organization of the commission into committees. Dr. May asked that the committee appoint a member to present to the commission. There was general discussion of the proposal. Mr. Goodnight moved that Mr. Spainhour be appointed to present to the commission. Sgt. Jones seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. May asked for the committee's input as to what should be emphasized to the commission. Suggestions included funding for resources provided through the Arkansas Center for School Safety, increased funding for school resource officers, whether there should be a specific ratio of SROs to students, what training should be required for SROs, how SROs should be selected, what standards should exist for safety drills, and what standards should exist for safety equipment for schools. Dr. May asked Sgt. Jones to research whether Community Oriented Policing Services grants are available to pay for SROs. Mr. Spainhour suggested that the committee urge the legislature provide more funds for school safety.

Sgt. Jones suggested that when a district reaches a certain size, there should be a staff member whose sole job would be to oversee security. Ms. Coffinan suggested developing a description of what functions SROs serve. The committee discussed other methods of providing armed security personnel for schools (police presence patrols, CSSOs, deputizing school employees). Mr. Clark and Mr. Goodnight both stated that teachers in their districts generally do not want to be armed. Mr. Gray stated that the student council in his district did not want their teachers to be armed. Mr. Clark and Sgt. Jones stated that the question of whether a CSSO should go after the shooter would have to be resolved. Mr. Spainhour stated that in his opinion, the best solution is an SRO and that arming teachers should be a last resort. Dr. May stated that there have been incidents in three states in which an armed teacher had negligently discharged a firearm in their

classrooms. Ms. Coffman suggested that research should be conducted into cases of school shootings in which teachers had been trained in how to respond to active shooter response, whether SROs were present on campus, etc.

Dr. May suggested the committee may wish to report to the commission on the need for mental health services in schools. Ms. Graham stated that her district had decided twenty years ago to hire its own social workers to provide mental health services for students, and that this was more effective than using social workers from health organizations. Dr. May questioned how school districts identify students who may be in distress. Mr. Spainhour described how his district performs threat assessments. Mr. Gray stated that students identified as needing special education services may not be subject to the same disciplinary procedures as other students and that when such a student has been identified as a possible threat, the district's hands may be tied for addressing the potential threat.

Mr. Gray and Mr. Spainhour both stated that a model for school safety assessments would be useful. Dr. May asked for opinions whether it is more important to focus on physical security or security procedures. Mr. Gray stated that an outward opening door is more useful for preventing intruders from getting into a classroom than an inward opening door, and that doors can be retrofitted at relatively low cost. There was discussion that many of the expedient locking devices being marketed should not be used. Sgt. Jones reported that the Game and Fish Commission has received funding for its officers to spend more time on school campuses.

Dr. May distributed copies of the federal STOP School Violence Act of 2018.

Dr. May reported that the governor had stated he would provide \$300,000 for the CJI to focus on SROs and school safety assessments. She also stated that Commissioner Key (ADE) had stated that CJI would receive a grant of \$160,000 from ADE.

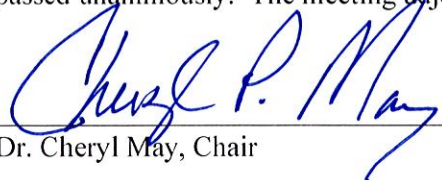
Ms. French reported on training for school staff conducted through the Arkansas Center for School Safety (ACSS). The training included classes on how to combat bullying in January 2018 and a class on school behavioral threat assessment for administrators and SROs, conducted by REMS in February 2018. She stated that a class on suicide prevention would be held in April. She stated that ACSS continues to update its course schedule. Dr. May asked the committee members to inform her of training needs of which they are aware. Ms. Coffman requested that the antibullying class be held again. Ms. French reported that the Safe Schools Conference would be held July 9 – 11, 2018.

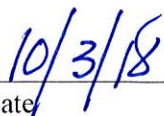
Sgt. Jones reported on progress on establishing different levels of SRO training and achievement. The subcommittee is also developing FAQs regarding SRO levels. He indicated that subcommittee would have a recommendation for the committee in the near future. Dr. May suggested announcing the levels at the school conference.

Dr. May reminded the committee that there will be a legislative session next year.

The next committee meeting was scheduled for June 21, 2018, 11:00 AM, at the Criminal Justice Institute.

Ms. Curtis moved adjourn the meeting. Mr. Spainhour seconded. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:19 PM.

  
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Dr. Cheryl May, Chair

  
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Date